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THE PEOPLE FOR PEACE.

M. DE CORMENIN'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

The careful reader of our pages will remember, in our account of the last Peace Congress at London, in connexion with the World's Industrial Exhibition, the name of this distinguished Frenchman as a prominent member, and especially as having proposed, and carried unanimously, the following resolution or declaration:—

“The Congress recommends the members of Peace Societies in all constitutional countries to use their influence in returning to their respective Parliaments representatives who are friends of peace, who will be prepared to support by their vote, measures for the diminution of the number of men employed in, and the amount of money expended for, war purposes.”

In pursuance of these views, M. Cormenin addressed, on the eve of the late election in England, a long and eloquent “Address to the English members of the Peace Congress, and to the English electors generally.”

Before giving extracts from this able and interesting document, it may be well to apprise our readers of M. Cormenin's reputation and standing in France. His public, zealous espousal of our cause was hailed by the friends of Peace with great pleasure.

“It would be difficult,” says the *London Herald of Peace*, “to overrate the value of such an auxiliary. Occupying for many years a distinguished place among the public men of France, raised by his character and talents to some of its most important offices, a jurist of the very highest authority, a poet of considerable celebrity, and a political writer of unparalleled popularity and power, M. de Cormenin is also no less favorably, if less extensively known for his eminent private virtues, and his great benevolence. He sat for many years in the French Chambers, having been chosen on one occasion by no less than three constituencies. He was long a member of the Council of State, and was, we believe, President of that illustrious body after the last Revolution. ‘In 1835,’ says a French writer now before us, ‘he founded at Montargis the first association for the liberty of the press, and about the same time he became president of a society for the instruction of the people.’ His writings are very numerous. The most important, perhaps, is that entitled *Droit Administratif*, in two volumes octavo, which has passed through some sixteen editions. ‘This work,’ says M. Audiffret, ‘is an authority before all tribunals, the Royal Courts, the Council of State, and even the Court of Cassation, which by many of its judgments has confirmed its doctrines.’ His more popular works have produced a greater sensation, and been more widely circulated, than those of almost any living author. What may we not hope from a writer wielding so powerful and brilliant a pen, devoting himself, in the full maturity of his mind and genius, with all the prestige of his great personal and literary reputation, to the propagation of the Divine principles of ‘peace on earth and good-will toward men?’”

In a private note, M. Cormenin says, “I believe that this election is a favorable opportunity to express our views as Frenchmen, respecting that strange opinion of our bellicose intentions towards you which has prevailed among you so long, and which *is false in every sense*. * * * You may be quite sure, that I have exactly represented the thoughts of a very large number of my countrymen; and we cannot recover ourselves from the astonishment into which we have been thrown by the extravagance of your

statesmen. We have not more men than are necessary for the maintenance of our internal peace; and for the rest, we are now more tranquil and further removed from war than we have ever been for the last sixty years. That is the real truth of the matter. And I do assure you, that since we have seen you thrown into such a fright, our estimation of your power has been singularly lowered. For that which we admired most of all in England, was precisely the fact, that we saw there neither soldiers nor militia-men."

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS.

"It is with as much grief as surprise that we perceive England is mistrustful of us;—that we see her starting up with fear; rushing forward, as it were, to encounter us; arming her coasts till they bristle with forts and cannon; and turning pale at the mirage of an invasion. Really we never should have given her credit for so much imagination. Well may we ask ourselves how it is, that being generally so remarkably prudent, having so cool and calculating a brain, and such a very decided inkling for economy, England can have so recklessly saddled her already overcharged budget with an expenditure so considerable and so positive, at the bare idea of a fantastic and intangible contingency.

In the name of heaven, for what cause should we make war upon England? Is it that we may inundate her ports with wares similar to those with which she is already glutted? A queer way this of supplying your markets! Is it that we may, by main force, and irrespective of tide-waiters and custom-house officers, land upon her shores our brandies and our tart wines? A queerer way, this, of wheedling you into drinking them! Is it that we may take sly revenge for some insult? For what insult, pray? How received, and when or where? Is it for vain glory's sake? for the love of battling? Pooh! who amongst us at the present day feasts off vain glory? Who cares about battling, unless it be behind a double row of foot-lights in the theatres on the Boulevards, or in the stereotyped *ritornellos* of the press and the tribune!

Never, at any period, has there existed less of hate, less of prejudice against England, amongst the masses of our agriculturists and our artizans, in our administration, amongst our clergy, in our press, in our army, amongst our politicians, and in our government. There is not amongst us a single party, Orleanist, Legitimist, Republican, Bonapartist, or Socialist, that has an interest in exciting public opinion against Great Britain, and declaring war against her. Never was France in a milder mood, never were her manners more pleasant, affable and easy. All that she asks of her government is, comfortable baths of luke-warm water, a good bed, and a place under the wall to sun herself. In vain I turn my ear from side to side; I do not hear the demon of war howling man-slaughter out of our brazen-mouthed trumpets. In vain I look right and left; I do not see our minors of eighteen years old, hurrying to the recruiting-offices. When the conscription stamps its fatal number on their forehead, we are obliged to bedeck them, poor children, and bedizen them with ribandlets and flowers, and they have the good sense—the great, the uncommon good sense—to allow themselves, when fairly muddled, to be surprised with tears in their eyes; so afraid are they of going to be killed; which, however, would not prevent them from fighting you very fiercely, gentlemen, if the opportunity presented itself.

Wherefore, on our side, of foolish hatred there is none; of evil intentions, none; of felonious deeds, none; of percussion caps, none; of flat-bottomed or other boats, none; of fiercely-bristled mustachios, none. It is all to no purpose that I tax my wits to my wits end, and rack my brains; I cannot for the life of me hit upon a reason, ever so modestly reasonable, for your having so foolishly militiaized yourselves after this fashion.

But, what are we prating about the power of reason to prevent war? Let us talk, yes, above all let us talk about the power of powerlessness. Does there exist a solitary state, which, in the actual condition of financial affairs in Europe generally, would be able to undertake, still less to maintain a war, without ingulfing itself in the ruins of bankruptcy? Further, is it possible to conceive a war that would not sweep away, in its orbit of blood and fire, all the other states; either all at once and by an explosion, or one after the other, the nearest first, like the blasting of a train of gunpowder. Is it possible to imagine a war that would not at the outset, and on the instant, confound peoples and soldiery in one frightful conflict? Banks, Treasuries, Commerce, Agriculture, Sciences, Letters, Arts, Trades, Callings, and Professions; the whole of the social machinery would come at once to a dead stop. Constitutions, Charters, Laws, Regulations, Empires, Monarchies, Republics; all and every one would be dislocated from the effects of a sudden and all-powerful contraction, and would each and all be thrown back topsy-turvy upon themselves. And the stake at issue! it would no longer be a question of the existence of one king or another king, of one people or another people, but a matter of life and death individually as between man and man. I foresee, and I believe I know, what would happen elsewhere. But I know still better what would happen with us.

The staff of our political parties would begin, some thousands strong, as they would by quarrelling and fighting for the tattered shreds of power; but the non-political parties, that is, the lookers on, numbering some millions, the bulk of the people, would swallow up their leaders, and menaced by torch and pitchfork, there would soon be heard on every side, only one general cry of "Save himself who can." Society all dishevelled, half drunk, half dead, would dance by the light of wide-spreading conflagrations, the wild witch-rounds of hell! On recovering from this stupor, every one would for a moment stand aghast, and all streaming with blood, just freshly escaped from the shambles and the butchery, brandishing his knife, would stand at bay before his executioner, and inch by inch defend his house, his homestead, his bed, his loaf, his wife, his daughter, common decency, his liberty, his religion, his life.

And whilst our citizens would be thus tearing one another limb from limb in the horrible fray and confusion of civil war, the enemy would enter pell-mell with our re-called and disbanded troops. France would dismember herself, and the remainder of her provinces would fall beneath the mute sword of some soldier of fortune. This would be, not perhaps the commencement, but the end of a war that we should have foolishly undertaken.

We must condense the question and resume. Never had France less strength, less justice, fewer pretexts, less need, less interest, less of public consent, less union, less money, less will, less impulse, to make an aggression against her neighbors, than she has at this moment. But also, never would she have had more right, power, cohesion, resources, courage, and invincible unanimity to repel an unjust attack. This is the spirit of France; this her position; and we know it, or ought to know it, I think, a little better than a good many folks beyond the Rhine, or on the chalky side of the Channel, who really do not know anything at all about us.

For my own part, gentlemen, in the course of my political existence, I have, I confess, witnessed a few very out-of-the-way things; so much so, that at the present moment I can scarcely believe that I have seen them. I have seen Napoleon—more to frighten than to hurt you—flotilla-ing it at Bologne. I have seen Louis XVIII. surprised and carried off, him and his kingdom, by 84 grenadiers from the island of Elba with muskets reversed. I have seen the urchins of Paris smash the regal crown of France between two paving-stones. I have seen bronzed heroes of Africa in cum-

fortable cotton night-caps, just as they jumped out of bed, clapped into a hackney-coach by hectors of the police. After that, I think, and I am willing to admit, there is nothing that is impossible, and that may not be believed without hesitation, or too much credulity, or without leaving much to imagination. My morning paper of the day might inform me that the Pope has driven the Austrians out of Ancova, and is advancing at the head of his Cardinals to lay seige to Vienna; or that M. Kossuth is returning to his Hungary, laden with dollars, and backed by Yankees. I should say: "Hum! well, certainly that's strong, indeed *'tis coming it* very strong; but it is possible, for the thing has been done; or, at least, something very like it."

But for us,—us Frenchmen, at this moment, involved as we are, for us to run ourselves aground by over-loading ourselves with five hundred millions more;—for us to equip five hundred boats, more or less flat-bottomed; to embark on board of them a small handful of men, say forty thousand;—to land them at Dover, and march them straight upon London! Assuredly, that would be by far the most bankrupt-like and most monstrous folly of all the follies I have yet seen. For the English to believe it, too, is on their part, even yet more foolish than anything. What! afraid of our forty-thousand freshly disembarked landsmen! Why, this goes beyond all that one can possibly imagine. Just imagine for a moment all the peers and the doughty knights and baronets of the three United Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, headed by F. M. the duke, the iron-duke, taking fright in the midst of their twenty-three millions of men, trembling with fear, and bolting like so many nervous curs with their bob-tails between their legs, before our forty-thousand halberdiers! No! Old England, the first power in the world, the queen of the ocean, the classic land of bombs and congreve rockets; the foster-mother of guineas and bank-notes, which are the sinews of war: no! she cannot surely tremble, fall back, turn pale and cast herself on her knees before forty thousand men, even were every man-jack of them a hero; even though these should be French conscripts, taken scarcely a year since from the plough-tail, or out of our shops. Why, to allow such mischievous panics to break out, and make head, shows that the English government can have but very little faith in the soundness of its institutions, in the immensity of its resources, in the confidence of its citizens, in the union, the energy, the patriotism, the enthusiasm of its sons. I blush for England, and for very shame hide my face. I behold with pain, with pity, a nation that I love, and that I glorify, lowering herself to such a degree of humiliation and weakness. I feel that England cannot decline to this point in the esteem of the world, even from fear of us, without damaging us likewise in our communion with her, and without affording the partizans of absolute power a glorious opportunity of attributing to the enervating rule of free institutions, the necessity for such extravagant precautions being taken, even though they be but the embodiments of a morbid imagination, and of blaming it for the cowardly prostration of mind and body into which the English nation has fallen."

Thus it turns out, that the whole war-panic which so nearly frightened the statesmen of England out of their wits a few months ago, and led to the passage of her recent militia-bill, with a prospective increase of her war-expenses several millions of dollars a year, was all a piece of sheer delusion, if not a trick of political jugglers to revive the predominance of military ideas for the benefit of her aristocracy, the creatures and nurslings of her war-system. A fresh proof of this delusion is found in a report just published respecting the present state of the French navy:—'

REDUCTION OF THE FRENCH NAVY.—According to a recent statement of M. Dufaure, "*the French navy has never been reduced to a lower state of efficiency.*" By the Royal ordinance of 1837, the strength of the French navy was fixed at 40 line-of-battle ships and 50 frigates, one-half of which were to be afloat, in commission, or in ordinary, and the other half ready to be launched at very short notice. There were to be in addition 220 smaller vessels, including steamers and transports. But nothing approaching this amount of force was ever attained, even in point of numbers; and in point of efficiency, the falling off is still greater. The whole number of line-of-battle ships in the French navy was 23 in 1846,—and it is now called 26; but we doubt whether the force of the new vessels afloat is at all equivalent to the progressive decay of the old ships. *Of these 26 vessels, only 12 are now fit for sea, and the 14 others are pronounced, after the most scrupulous investigation, to be fit only to protect the coast and the roadsteads.* The *Ocean*, which was refitted in 1836, was built in 1790. The *Montebello*, the *Diadem*, the *Jena*, the *Trident*, the *Marengo*, have all been afloat upwards of forty years; and the *six ships* which constitute Admiral La Susse's squadron of evolution, *are, in fact, the most available portion of the fleet.* At this time, 8 of the line-of-battle ships are in commission, and 4 others might be added to them; but that is the whole strength of the French navy in ships of the line. It is therefore possible for the French Government to equip only one squadron, supposing the whole of its resources to be united; and that squadron would leave the country without any reserve after the first action. To employ such a squadron on the great manœuvres by which Ganteaume and Villeneuve endeavored to draw our forces from the Channel, would be to leave the ports of France without a sound line-of-battle ship, and to risk the destruction of the fleet altogether. The state of the frigates is less discreditable, for of 37 which are in existence only 8 are more than 20 years old; *but, as for the 103 small vessels included under the names of corvettes, brigs, avisos, &c., the commission condemns most of them to be sold, or broken up altogether.* This being the actual state of the ships, it matters comparatively little at what amount the strength of the navy is to be fixed on paper.

SOURCE OF WAR-LEGISLATION.

How is it, inquired one of the speakers at an anti-militia meeting in London, how is it that, in spite of the opinion of the public as expressed by nearly 1500 petitions, the bill has been still persevered with? Why, out of the 658 members of the House of Commons, 356 are either military or naval officers, or their near connexions; and of the 455 peers of the upper house, 346 are either directly or indirectly interested in the military system. No man can oppose the bill in the House of Commons without being insulted by the predominant military party there. Without having attended the debates night after night, as I have done, no one can have any conception of the difficulties which the small but brave band of members who are the advocates of peace and financial reform, have had to encounter. It is not merely that they are met with frowns and sneers from the ministerial benches; what struck me as still worse is, that they are met with sullen silence, indicating a total absence of all sympathy, by the great majority of the whigs. Among these, no less than among the Tories, there is a great preponderance of gentlemen who are more or less connected with the naval and military departments.

All honor, then, to Richard Cobden; all honor to John Bright, to Milner Gibson, and to the remainder of the small band of which our chairman is one of the most active members. All honor to the small band of courageous and noble-minded men who, in the face of sneers, and scorn, and derision, have dared to uphold the banner of peace in the House of Commons.

THE REMEDY.—Well, then, what is the remedy for all this? We must make a steady, persevering effort to diminish the number of naval and military men in that house. In the United States of America no naval or military officer is allowed to sit in the Legislature at all. That exclusion is right in principle; for as long as such persons are present, any attempt to diminish expenditure will be resented by them as a personal affront.

There is another thing which we must do; we must insist upon inquiry being pushed still further into the expenditure for the army and navy. Since the peace of 1815, \$3,000,000,000 have been spent upon our naval and military defences; and, if we are defenceless, the question arises, what has been done with the money? In the present year there has already been voted \$87,500,000 for the national defence; a sum which exceeds the amount raised by all the great religious societies during the last 50 years! Another thing at which we must aim, is the formation of correct views of the comparative dignity of labor and military service. There are some who are beginning to talk of the honor and dignity of being soldiers. When such language is addressed to young men, let them reply, 'If you think it an honorable and dignified thing to be dragged away from your home, to be encased in scarlet like a boiled lobster, and to be deprived of the free use of your limbs for several hours in the day, we, the young men of the working and middle classes, have no desire to deprive you of such honor and dignity; you may keep it all to yourselves.' I rejoice to find a feeling growing up in this country, that labor is more honorable than military service; and I have no doubt it will go on increasing, notwithstanding the complaint of a liberal newspaper, (the *Spectator*,) that the people of England are growing effeminate, and require military exercise to save them from such a result. For my own part, I will not fall down before any military idol; if I stand alone in the community, and the idol even assumes the form of the Duke of Wellington, I will not express my veneration for an embodiment of brute force. Let me ask, who is the brave man? Is it the reckless scapegrace who, having lost by his prodigality and folly the affection of his dearest friends, and having closed against himself every avenue to honorable occupation, enlists in the army, subjects himself to be lashed like a hound, and risks being shot under the influence of animal passion; or is it your pale-faced artizan, who, through long years of toil and hardship, when wages are low and bread high, suffers all kinds of privations, and will not go to the parish for relief because he would not have his children touched by the stain of pauperism? (Loud cheers.) I rejoiced to hear such a response to such a sentiment from the young men of the metropolis. Remember that your opponents have insisted on passing the bill through the House of Commons with all its most obnoxious clauses unmodified; that they have retained the ballot; that they have retained the Mutiny Act; that they have retained the power of flogging; that they have retained the billeting on public-houses; in short, that they have retained everything which is most obnoxious to the people of this country.

Well, then, what is to be done? Let your legislators be told by the voice of the young men of the country, that, come what may, they will not submit to this law, and will take all consequences. There are in this country between two and three hundred thousand persons who are employed as Sunday-school teachers. Are such persons to be dragged from their useful occupations to serve in a militia?